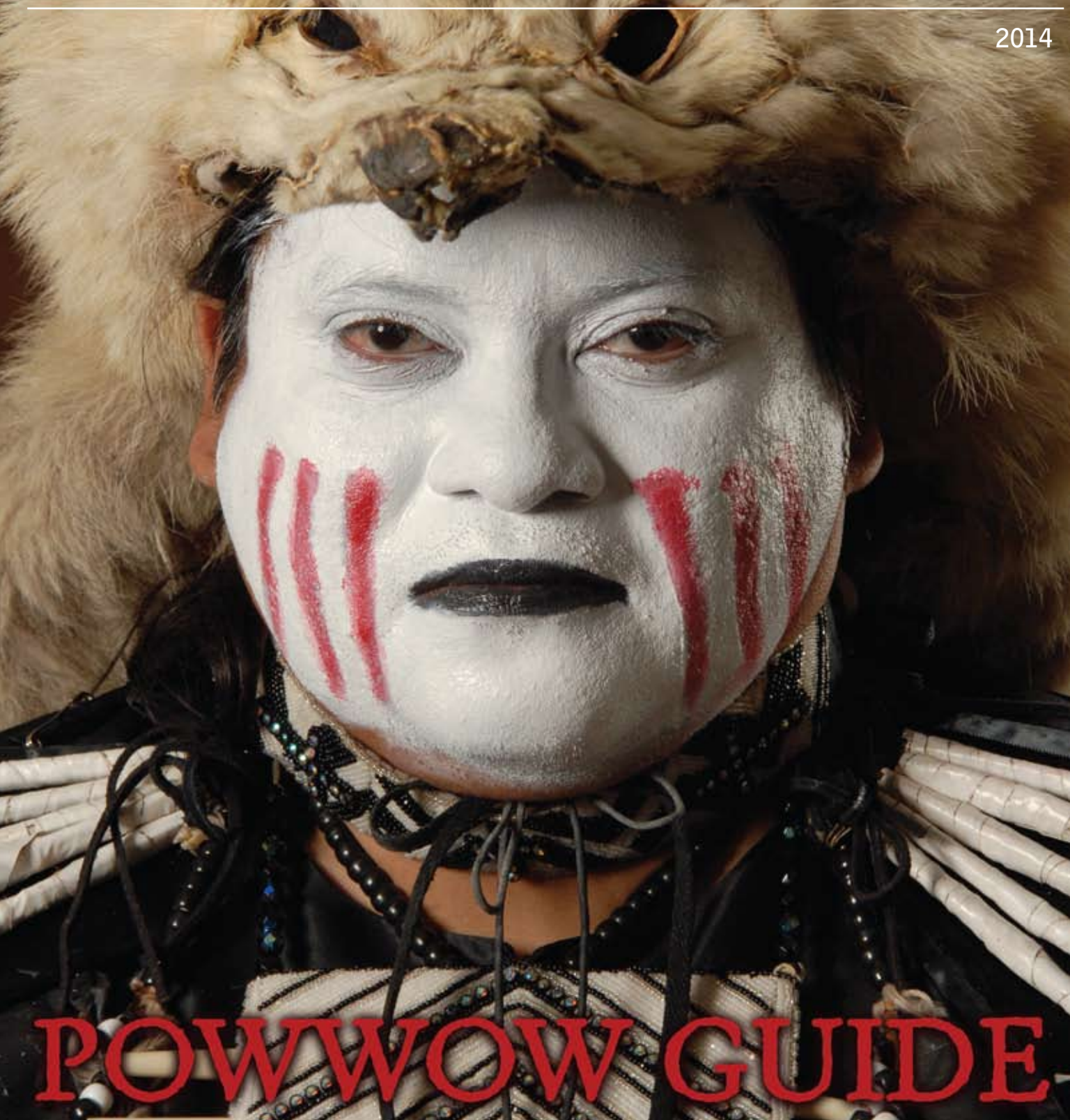


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NATIVE OKLAHOMA

2014



POWWOW GUIDE



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Comanche Coup Counter by Quanah Parker Burgess ©CNMCC

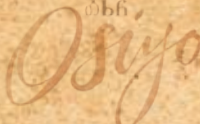
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Native Oklahoma is a monthly publication of the Native American Times, Oklahoma's weekly Inter-Tribal community newspaper.

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JOHN KEEL, COMANCHE/PAWNEE/OTOE WITH WIFE LORIE, OKLAHOMA CHOCTAW

Comanche John: The man behind the paint

By DANA ATTOCKNIE
Comanche

GRANT, Okla. – Wearing the intense color contrast of black and white is a signature look for John Keel when he enters the powwow arena. The colors are intermingled throughout his Northern Traditional regalia. His face is coated in stark white paint with three even blood red marks dripping down each side, and the black paint on his lips seem to match the intensity in his eyes.

“That white face paint and whole regalia ... It’s something that’s hard to explain. All of a sudden I just woke up and just painted up that way,” John Keel said. “It just kind of came to me and it wasn’t explained ... I woke up and my hands started painting, you know, that face ... It wasn’t that I was told or taught ... I just started doing that.”

Keel is Comanche, Pawnee and Otoe. His parents are the late Claudette and Norman Keel, and it was his father Norman who once told him about Pawnee warriors who covered their faces in white paint.

“There was some warriors that painted that way. When they were in battle they were easy targets so you could see that from far away, and if you survived everything that shows bravery,” Keel said.

According to powwows.com, Pawnee scouts painted their faces white to represent the wolf, whose spiritual power was believed to be of great assistance.

Keel said his regalia has been the same since 1988 and the look doesn’t feel old. He remembers competing against a young man at a powwow once, and the young man wanted to shake his hand after the dance competition. The young man told Keel when he was a little kid he used to be scared of him, and he liked how Keel hasn’t changed his regalia or face paint.

“That’s when I finally realized one thing: I’m getting real old,” Keel laughs. “Another thing, I guess I really did just stay to one thing. To me it feels like it’s still new ... I just have the same thing, black and white.”

Keel has been in the powwow arena

since before he could walk, and by the time he could take his first step his mom already had regalia for him. He started out as a fancy dancer. In 1997, he won first place in both the fancy dance and traditional dance competitions. He said, there was never a time when his father said it was time to learn how to dance. Instead, it was just a part of their lives.

“It’s just like I can’t remember when I started walking, and the same story, I can’t remember when I started dancing; I always did,” Keel said. “To me and my brothers and sisters, it’s just like breathing. We just got into it.”

Keel said his dad did make him and his siblings practice in full regalia while listening to cassette tapes, and



JOHN KEEL DANCES WITH HIS GRANDDAUGHTER, KINSLEY.

he remembers a couple of etiquette lessons from them, like not to eat in and around the arena. Other than that, he said his parents led by example. He has two brothers and two sisters, although one brother is deceased. He said his father participated in Native American shows in North Carolina and at Six Gun Territory in Ocala, Fla.

“When I dance it’s real spiritual,” Keel said. “It just heals me and if I don’t do it for a long time, I just don’t feel right. I have to get out there and do that.”

Keel said he has three step-children, and he and his wife Lorie always take their granddaughter Kinsley with them to dances. She is a jingle dress dancer and loves to joke around with her grandpa.

“We’ve got two granddaughters, but this one, she goes everywhere with us. I

guess she was two-weeks-old when she started going to the dances with us and she hasn’t missed a one that we’ve been to. She just turned 6,” Lorie Keel, Oklahoma Choctaw, said. “Him (John) and Kinsley, they make stink faces at each other and people will be looking at him and they’re afraid to talk to him and everything, but he’s just being silly with her.”

Lorie said her husband is real, and even though a lot of people ask to take pictures of him, he still remains bashful.

“It’s funny, because it kind of overwhelms him,” she said. “He’s who you see and I think that’s why a lot of people want to take pictures (of him), because there’s something about him that is just so true. He’s just not wearing paint, that’s who he is, and his parents really taught him traditional ways. His brothers and his sisters, all of that whole family is like that. They’re very good people.”

Although his image has been seen in numerous publications, on promotional signs, and on merchandise such as t-shirts, Keel said he hasn’t even seen a lot of those items. He said he’s only been asked a handful of times for his image to be used.

“I just really can’t believe it. I can’t believe that picture is all over,” Keel said of his image. “That one morning when I was at that Pawnee Bill’s, I just got up and painted (my face) that way for some reason and now it’s all over everything, and that was back in 1988 when I did that, and I stayed with that (face paint) all the way until now.”

Keel has a personal web site, <http://www.comanchejohnenterprises.com/>, which he plans to update with photos soon. He sometimes goes by the name Comanche John, and although they don’t travel out of state too often, Keel said he enjoyed going to the Crow fair in Montana, as well as powwows in Albuquerque, Florida and Texas.

“He’s just a really good person. He takes care of his family. What people see when he’s out in the arena, that’s who he is. He’s not pretending to be something that he’s not,” Lorie said. “The things that he was taught, that’s the way he lives, he doesn’t put on a show ... he’s a good person.”

POWWOW DANCES:

Who's doing what in the arena

Powwow dancers attempt to catch the judges' eyes with personal style, footwork falling on the beat of the music, and well-made dance attire. A dancer can be disqualified if they dance off beat, drop a part of the dance outfit during the performance, or fail to stop with both feet on the ground when the last beat of the drum sounds. A good dancer combines traditional aspects with personal attitude and individuality.

Men's Traditional Dance

Men's Traditional dancers tell a story with their movements - one of hunting, tracking, fighting, or imitating the courtship dances of prairie birds. The dancers' feet stay close to the ground while their heads and upper bodies actively play out their story line. This dance and the associated dance dress, or regalia, originated with 19th century warrior society members who danced to recount their war deeds and to tell stories.

Men's Fancy Dance



Taking basic steps and regalia from the Traditional dance, Fancy Dancers dress is noted for the colorful beadwork, feathers, ribbons, and an additional bustle worn at the back of the neck - accentuating each of the dancer's athletic movements. The best Fancy Dancers are able to make the complex movements of their body and regalia fall on beat with the drum as well as dazzle your eyes.

Men's Grass Dance



Marked by quick and fluid movements, the Grass Dance is more active than the Men's Traditional dance. Grass Dancers move by shaking their shoulders, swaying their torsos from the hip, and darting suddenly to change their direction. They do not wear a bustle, but rather a shirt and pants heavily fringed with ribbon, yarn or cloth moving as an extension of the dancer's body, reminiscent of prairie grass swaying in the wind. Some Grass Dancers use trick steps that give the appearance that the dancer is off balance, only to gracefully recover just in time.

Women's Traditional Dance

The Women's Traditional dance is a powerful and personal dance of expression. These dancers move with extreme grace and subtlety, keeping their feet close to the ground and either moving slowly forward or bobbing slightly with the beat of the drum. These simple steps have their origin in older times when women did not dance in the arena, but stood outside the circle and kept time with their feet. Dancers wear or carry shawls, a sign of modesty and respect, and long traditional buckskin or cloth dresses.

Women's Fancy Shawl Dance

Fancy Shawl dancers are recognized by their energetic dance style, in which they seem to float around the arena, their shawls outstretched like beautiful wings. Dancers create this illusion by moving around the arena on their toes, kicking high and twirling into the air. This dance is extremely athletic and strenuous, and is usually danced by girls and young women. The dancers keep up with the fast pace of the song while retaining a gentle elegance, using their beautifully decorated fringed shawls to accentuate every movement.

Women's Jingle Dress Dance



The most musical of the powwow dances, the Jingle Dress competition is gracefully accompanied by the tinkling sound of the jingle dress in motion. These dancers are distinctive in their dresses covered by rows of triangular metal cones. The dance has no set choreography, and dancers use a variety of rocking, stepping and hopping motions to make the jingles on their dresses chime along with the beat of the drum. Although this dance originated in Northern Minnesota among the Anishinabe people, it has become tremendously popular among women dancers of all ages on the Northern Plains.

IN ADDITION TO COMPETITION DANCES AND SPECIALS, A NUMBER OF SOCIAL DANCES FILL THE SCHEDULE. VISITORS SHOULD FEEL FREE TO JOIN IN UPON INVITATION FROM THE EMCEE.



THE BETTER THE DRUM, THE MORE THE DANCERS FEEL THE EXCITEMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE. THE DRUM IS A TERM USED TO REFER TO BOTH THE INSTRUMENT AND THE GROUP OF PEOPLE SITTING AT THE DRUM TO PLAY AND SING.

PHOTO COURTESY SAMMY STILL | UKB POWWOW

Tiny Tots Dance



When the announcer calls for the Tiny Tots dance, a number of young children fill the arena; dancing, wiggling and jumping along to the beat of the drum. The Tiny Tots dance includes young children, ages 6 and under, who are just learning to dance - encouraging them

to join in with powwow activities. The inclusion of youngsters in the powwow dances ensures that the next generation carries on the powwow tradition - and work to become the champion powwow dancers of tomorrow!

Social Dances

In addition to competition dances and specials, a number of social dances fill the powwow schedule. Among these are the intertribal and round dances, that include all dance categories, ages and genders. Powwow visitors should feel free to join in these dances upon invitation from the Emcee.

Music: The Drums

It is hard to imagine a powwow without a drum. It is the drum that makes the dancers want to move, and the better the drum, the more the dancers feel the excitement of the performance. The drum is a term

used to refer to both the instrument and the group of people sitting at the drum to play and sing. One or more lead singers, who start the songs, may have over one hundred songs in the personal repertoire. The songs sung at powwow are varied and endless in number: some are traditional and passed down through history, others are contemporary and created to speak to current concerns and interests. Some of the songs are sung in their traditional tribal language, which aides to keeping the languages alive and vital for the younger generation. Many of the songs are sung in vocables (rhythmically sung syllables) such as "hey," "yah" or "lay." The use of vocables makes the songs easier for singers and dancers of all tribes to remember. There are typically a number of drum groups at each powwow, and they trade off the playing duties for each song.



BEN YAHOLA EXPLAINS THE TRADITIONAL GAME OF CHUNKEY TO VISITORS DURING THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION FESTIVAL IN OKMULGEE, OKLA.

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POWWOWS & EVENTS

Powwow dates, times and locations are subject to change. Please call ahead or check online in advance before making travel plans. See www.nativeoklahoma.us for more listings and updates through the season.

EVERY TUESDAY

A Taste of Native Oklahoma Lunches. 11 am-2 pm. Featuring Indian Tacos & More. Jacobson House Native Art Center, 609 Chautauqua Ave., Norman

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Every Wednesday: Powwow Singing & Drumming, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm. Hosted by OUSNAG. Jacobson House Native Art Center, 609 Chautauqua Ave., Norman

EVERY 1st FRIDAY: Indian Taco Sales – from 4:00 – 8:00 pm at Angie Smith Memorial UMC, 400 S. W. 31st Street, Oklahoma City

Flute circle, 7:00pm-9:00pm. Jacobson House Native Art Center, 609 Chautauqua Ave., Norman

EVERY 2nd SATURDAY

Indian Taco Sales - from 11-2:30pm at OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance, 5320 S. Youngs Blvd, Oklahoma City www.okchoctaws.org

EVERY 3rd SATURDAY: All you can Eat Breakfast SALE – from 8- to 11:00 am at Angie Smith Memorial UMC, 400 S.W. 31st Street, Oklahoma City

THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2014

Comanche National Museum and Cultural Center presents Comanche Code of Honor, a new exhibit honoring the heroic Comanche Code Talkers of World War II. For more information call 580-353-0404 or go to www.comanchemuseum.com.

APRIL 4

NdN taco sale 11am-3pm, at Indian

Fellowship Baptist Church: 6130 S. 58th W. Ave, Oakhurst. \$7 for a taco and dessert. Info or for delivery, call Mary @ 918-636-8394.

American Indian Youth Leadership Spring Powwow at McCurtain County Sports Complex, Broken Bow. Head to this event to experience traditional storytelling, music and art. This is the 18th year the community will share American Indian heritage with others at this exciting event. Youth art is on display and special demonstrations of gourd dancing and stick ball playing will be presented. Come experience the beauty of American Indian culture at this free event. For more information, please call 580-584-3365.

APRIL 5

Checotah Native Art Market, 9am-4pm at the Heartland Heritage Museum & Gallery, 116 N Broadway, Checotah. Paintings, beadwork, textiles, leather crafts, cultural items, jewel, music, demonstrations, Native food concessions and more. Free to the public. For information call Frankie Blagg, 918-916-9015

Bacone College Benefit Dance at Old Warrior Gym, 2299 Old Bacone Road, Muskogee. Gourd Dancing starts at 3pm, War Dance at 6pm. More info contact Elsie Whitehorn | 918-360-3617 | whitehorne@bacone.edu

Native Voices in Recovery Benefit Dance at Custer County Fairgrounds, Clinton, Okla. Gourd Dance at 3pm.

Pawnee Scout Symposium at 8:30 am, location TBA. For information contact (918) 762-3363, ext. 11, or mburgess@pawneenationcollege.org

Fife Indian United Methodist Church Azalea Powwow at the Muskogee Civic Center, Muskogee. The Azalea

Powwow, held in conjunction with the city of Muskogee's annual Azalea Festival, is an American Indian powwow that features gourd dancing and a spectacular grand entry. Attend the Azalea Powwow to see participants in full regalia dance to the sounds of traditional drums in a variety of dance competitions. Dance contests will include men's straight and traditional, men's fancy and shawl, women's cloth and buckskin, and women's fancy shawl and jingle dress. Food and merchandise vendors will also be on hand at the powwow. If you have questions or interest you may email v_hoover1116@yahoo.com. Please note in the subject box "Fife Pow Wow".

APRIL 7-12

Symposium of the American Indian "Thriving Nations-Resilient Peoples" at Northeastern State University, Tahlequah. In contemporary America, the quality of life for Native peoples bears scars of the traumatic phenomena spurred by U.S. government policies of forced termination and assimilation of the past. By acting upon the treaty and sovereign rights of tribal nations, organized and united efforts are at work today to protect indigenous rights, secure cultural capital, and generate vitality through Native initiatives on behalf of the family of Native peoples. The theme of the 42nd Annual Symposium on the American Indian is Thriving Nations - Resilient Peoples. Topics will focus on stimulating renewed perspectives on the self-determination of tribal peoples to inspire innovative thought on ways to secure and sustain well-being now and in the future. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the history, education, human experiences, the arts, social well-being, and politics that impact tribal peoples will be examined in a presentation/discussion format interspersed with cultural activities.

Cherokee National Holiday Powwow

August 29-30, 2014

GRAND ENTRIES

Fri & Sat 7pm

Registration opens at 5 pm
Two grand entries in full regalia
to qualify for contest
Points given for each grand entry

GOURD DANCE

6pm Friday & Sat. 2pm & 6pm
Host: Cherokee Gourd Society

HOST DRUMS

SOUTHERN DRUM:

Black Bear Creek, Pawnee, OK
NORTHERN DRUM: TBA

HEAD STAFF

EMCEES: Rob Daugherty
Cherokee, Jay, OK
Choogie Kingfisher
Cherokee, Tahlequah, OK

ARENA DIRECTORS

John Mouse, Cherokee,
Tahlequah, OK
John Farris,
Cherokee, Tahlequah, OK
Tim Washee,
Cherokee-Cheyenne-Arapaho,
Tahlequah, OK

HEAD SINGING JUDGE: TBA

COLOR GUARD

Cherokee Nation Honor Guard
United Keetoowah Band Honor
Guard

HEAD MAN

Joseph Bryd Jr.,
Tahlequah, OK

HEAD LADY:

Whitney Warrior,
Stilwell, OK

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COMPETITIONS

Golden age (Combined Ages 55+)

Girls: Cloth-Buckskin-Shawl-Jingle

Adult (Ages 18-54)

Mens: Southern Straight-Northern
Traditional-Fancy-Grass-Chicken Dance
Womens: Cloth-Southern Buckskin-
Northern Traditional-Fancy-Jingle

Tiny Tots (Ages 0-8) Open to all children
dressed in dance clothes

Northern Drum Contest: 1st \$2,000; 2nd
\$1,500; 3rd \$1,000

Southern Drum Contest: 1st \$2,000; 2nd
\$1,500; 3rd \$1,000

Teen (Ages 13-17)

Boys: Southern Straight-Northern
Traditional-Fancy-Grass
Girls: Cloth-Buckskin-Shawl-Jingle

SPECIALS:

Women's Jingle Dress
Women's Cherokee Tear Dress-\$300.00
winner takes all

Junior (Ages 9-12)

Boys: Southern Straight-Northern
Traditional-Fancy -Grass

Other Specials TBA



Cherokee Cultural Grounds, West 810 Rd. Tahlequah, Okla.

Powwow 5pm Friday, August 29th & 2pm Saturday, August 30th

For More Information call: 918-207-3872

Designed for a diverse public audience, the agenda includes both scholarly and general interest programs. All events are open to the public and free of charge.

APRIL 11-12

Northeastern State University Center for Tribal Studies Powwow in the University Center Rozell Ballroom. More information call 918.444.4350.

APRIL 12

Benefit Powwow for United Indian Methodist Church, Apache, Okla., at the Comanche Community Center. Gourd Dancing at 2pm, Social and War Dancing starts at 7pm.

Festival of the Four Winds, Sam Noble Museum of Natural History, 2401 Chautauqua Ave., Norman. Festival of the Four Winds in Norman is a celebration of the art and culture of tribal nations in Oklahoma. Held at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of National History on the University of Oklahoma campus, it is free and open to the public. It is guaranteed to be a day full of the cultural exchange of traditional art, music and dance celebrating tribes in Oklahoma. Attendees will learn about Native American nations through art, language, exhibits and storytelling. Children and youth will have the opportunity to participate in hands-on art activities.

APRIL 12

Talihina Indian Festival Powwow at Talihina School Gym, Talihina. Come out and experience this annual powwow festival featuring handmade arts and crafts, food concessions and intertribal dancing. The Talihina Indian Festival Powwow is a celebration of dance and a gathering of friends and family. Gourd dancing will take place throughout the day with a break for an evening meal. In the evening, witness the Talihina Indian Festival Powwow's spectacular grand entry at 7:00pm, followed by intertribal dancing featuring men's fancy dance, traditional, straight and grass and

women's Southern cloth, buckskin, fancy shawl and jingle dances.

APRIL 12 – May 25

Trail of Tears Art Show at the Cherokee Heritage Center, 21192 S. Keeler Dr., Tahlequah. The annual Trail of Tears Art Show, held on the grounds of the Cherokee Heritage Center in Tahlequah, presents authentic Native American art in one of Oklahoma's oldest art shows. Open to artists from all federally recognized Native American tribes, the Trail of Tears Art Show displays a wide range of creativity and artistic style. This diverse art show attracts artists, art dealers and visitors from across the nation.

APRIL 13

UCO Contest Powwow at Hamilton Fieldhouse
Edmond, Okla. Gourd dancing at 2 p.m., Grand Entry at 7 p.m.

APRIL 19

Sapulpa Public Schools NASA contest powwow at Sapulpa High School gym, 3 S. Mission Street, Sapulpa. Gourd dancing at 3, grand entry at 6:30

Rose State College Powwow at the Performing Arts Center, 6420 SE 15th Street, Midwest City. Experience Native American culture firsthand at the Rose State College Powwow in Midwest City. This free event invites everyone out to take part in the festivities. Featured performances will include men's fancy, straight, traditional and grass dancing, as well as women's buckskin, cloth, shaw/fancy and jingle dancing. Enjoy the live music and entertainment, as well as a free, traditional dinner at 5pm. Vendors will also be on-site with arts and crafts, Native American items and more. More info call 405-736-0202.

APRIL 26-27

Gathering of Tribes Powwow. Head to McAlester's Southeast Expo, 4500 W. HWY 270, to experience the Gathering of Tribes Powwow. This Native American powwow features

two days of non-stop entertainment. From American Indian merchandise to gourd dancing and a stunning Grand Entry, you won't want to miss it. Bring out the whole family for fun, food and entertainment. The Gathering of Tribes Powwow will also feature an intertribal contest. Info call 918-420-3976.

MAY 3

Restoring Harmony Powwow at Westside YMCA, 5400 S Olympia Ave., Tulsa. Experience the spirit of an ancient tradition at the 2014 Restoring Harmony Powwow at Tulsa's Westside YMCA. This event begins with stickball games that will take you back in time. Continue with an awareness hike and a showing of the film "Bully." In the afternoon, enjoy traditional gourd dancing before the sun sets and the grand entry parade begins. Info call 918-382-2217.

MAY 10

Archaeology Day & Birthday Bash at Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center, 18154 1st St., Spiro. The annual Archaeology Day and Birthday Bash at the Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center is a day to celebrate the public opening of the only prehistoric Native American archaeological site in Oklahoma. Throughout the day, archaeologists will look at collections to help identify artifacts, Native American artists will show their wares and several lectures will be given. Visitors to this event will also enjoy guided tours and re-enactments. More info call 918-962-2062.

MAY 17

Cherokee Heritage Gospel Sing at the Cherokee Heritage Center, 21192 S. Keeler Dr., Tahlequah. Head over to Tahlequah for the annual Cherokee Heritage Gospel Sing, held at the renowned Cherokee Heritage Center. This event combines contemporary and traditional gospel music while providing a Cherokee community kinship. A free traditional hog fry dinner is available to all attendees. More info call 888-999-6007.

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JUNE 2

Tinker Intertribal Powwow in Joe B. Barnes Regional Park in Midwest City, from 1:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Interested vendors or participants should contact Corene Chakenatho at 405-734-7366.

JUNE 5-7

Red Earth Native American Cultural Festival at Remington Park, 1 Remington Place, Oklahoma City. Head to Oklahoma City's Red Earth Festival this June and witness as more than 1,200 American Indian artists and dancers from throughout North America gather to celebrate the richness and diversity of their heritage with the world. For three exciting days, Oklahoma City will be at the center of Native American art and culture as more than 30,000 people gather to celebrate. More info call 405-427-5228.

JUNE 6-7

Miami Nation Tribal Powwow, NEO College Arena, Miami. The Miami Nation Tribal Powwow, one of nine annual Native American celebrations in the Miami and Ottawa County area, is a festival of American Indian dance. Call 918-542-1445.

JUNE 8 – 14

Jim Thorpe Native American Games held at various sports venues in Oklahoma City. Visit Oklahoma City for a landmark event in sports: the Jim Thorpe Native American Games. The Jim Thorpe Native American Games will consist of 10 competitive sports including a Native American all-star football game featuring Oklahoma high school seniors. From the moment this event kicks off on Sunday with fireworks and the Parade of Nations, it is sure to be exciting and fun for the whole family. Toll Free: 855-584-2637

JUNE 8

Chilocco Powwow in the Event Center of the First Council Casino, seven miles north of Newkirk, OK. Gourd dance begins at 2:00 p.m. with grand entry at 6:30. Featured will be the Apache Fire Dance. Contact

Garland Kent, Sr at 580-352-2670.

JUNE 13 14

Arts on the Avenue, Cherokee Capitol Square, Tahlequah. Arts on the Avenue, held in historic Cherokee Capitol Square in downtown Tahlequah, features an assortment of fine art on display including jewelry, painting, pottery, wood carvings and sculptures, beadwork, baskets and photography, among others. A variety of Native American and non-Native American artists mostly from Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri showcase their fine art. On Friday night enjoy Wines on the Avenue. 918-453-5728

JUNE 14

Bring the whole family out to the Inter-Tribal Children's Powwow and Fun Fest in Miami for a day of activities and exhibitions of tribal dance. Educational and fun activities and games for kids begin with the fun fest at 12pm. Storytellers will tell traditional stories and there will be live entertainment throughout the day. All ages will enjoy browsing the craft booths offering a variety of handmade items at the Inter-Tribal Children's Powwow and Fun Fest. Call 918-542-7232 or 918-325-0159

JUNE 14

Tinker Inter-Tribal Council Powwow at Joe Barnes Regional Park, Midwest City. Join thousands as they gather at Midwest City's Joe B. Barnes Regional Park to honor the veteran warriors from Oklahoma Native American tribes at the Tinker Inter-Tribal Council Powwow. Free and open to the public, this powwow is a great opportunity for your family to experience the vibrant and fascinating culture of the American Indian tribes that call Oklahoma home. Activities will include Native American traditional dance, singing, art, jewelry, food and a children's tent. Phone: 405-739-8232

JUNE 20-22

Iowa Tribal Powwow at the Iowa Tribal Complex, Bah-Kho-Je Powwow Grounds, Perkins.

Features gourd dancing, as well as dance competition categories that will include cloth, buckskin, jingle, fancy shawl, straight, traditional, grass and fancy dancing. Juniors, teens, women and men will all be represented. Call 580-304-6731

JUNE 20-22

Peoria Powwow, 60610 E. 90 Road, Miami. The annual Peoria Powwow in Miami is a grand festival of Native American culture and dance. This American Indian event features a wide range of contest dancing, including gourd dancing and straight dancing, as well as grass, traditional and fancy dancing. Other categories of dance will also include cloth, buckskin, jingle and fancy shawl. Come to the Peoria Powwow in Miami and join the Master of Ceremonies as he or she leads visitors throughout the festival's various events. Call 918-540-2535.

JUNE 26-29

Muscogee Nation Festival at Claude Cox Omniplex in Okmulgee. Each June, thousands of people gather at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Claude Cox Omniplex in the city of Okmulgee for a weekend filled with activities celebrating contemporary Muscogee life. This annual celebration includes cultural exhibitions, an award-winning rodeo, concerts featuring local and national acts, sports tournaments, arts and crafts, food, a parade through historic downtown Okmulgee, senior citizen's activities, children's activities and many more festivities for the entire family to enjoy. For more information on the Festival, contact MCN Tourism & Recreation at (918) 732-7992 by e-mail at tourism@muscogeenation-nsn.gov or online at www.muscogeenation-nsn.gov.

JUNE 27-29

Tonkawa Tribal Powwow at Fort Oakland, Tonkawa. Come out and experience the Tonkawa Tribal Powwow, an annual tribal celebration featuring Native American dancing, contests, crafts, artwork and food. Dance styles will include straight,

fancy, traditional, cloth and buckskin categories. Stick around for a traditional Tonkawa scalp dance during the festival and a Nez Perce memorial ceremony Saturday morning. This year's event will also include sporting tournaments, a catfish tournament and a scout dance. Free camping, along with electric and water hookups, will be available. Call 580-628-2561.

JUNE 28

Murrow Indian Children's Home 3rd Annual Powwow at Bacone College's Palmer Center, 2299 Old Bacone Road, Muskogee. Gourd Dancing begins at 2pm. Bring your own lawn chairs - free and open to the public. For more information call 918-682-2586 or look online at www.murrowchildrenshome.org

JUNE 28 – JULY 1

Pawnee Indian veterans Powwow held at the Memorial Stadium. For more info call Toni Hill (918) 762-3621 Ext. 25

JULY 2-4

Kiowa Gourd Clan Celebration, Carnegie City Park, Carnegie. This event will feature the tribe's Sun Dance, held in the middle of summer during the longest and hottest days of the year. Visit the Kiowa Gourd Clan Celebration to see gourd dancing, stunning shawls and drumming exhibitions, and celebrate Kiowa heritage at this traditional ceremony. Call 580-654-2300.

JULY 3-6

Quapaw Tribal Powwow at Quapaw Tribal Grounds, 5681 S. 630 Road, Quapaw. Head to Quapaw this July to experience American Indian traditions with the Quapaw tribe. The tribe holds an annual celebration over the 4th of July weekend that includes dancing, contests, vendors and plenty of family fun. Come celebrate the culture and history of the Quapaw Tribe. Call 918-542-1853.

JULY 10 - 13

Sac & Fox Nation Powwow at Sac & Fox Nation Tribal Grounds, 920883 S State Hwy 99, Stroud. Come and experience this annual American Indian event featuring native dancing, singing, dance competitions, arts and crafts, a rodeo, food vendors, outdoor camping and much more. Enjoy the Sac & Fox Nation Celebration Open Rodeo at this annual powwow and witness traditional rodeo events such as bull riding, bareback riding, saddle bronc riding, team roping, calf roping, steer wrestling and more. Call Toll Free: 800-259-3970

JULY 17-20

The Otoe-Missouria Tribe will host its 133rd annual encampment this July at the tribe's dancing grounds, 7500 Hwy 177, located 20 miles north of Stillwater. One of the most important gatherings for the Otoe-Missouria people, this event will include gourd dancing, a 5K run and contest dancing. The 2014-2015 Otoe-Missouria Princess will also be crowned during the four-day event. Arts and craft vendors, as well as food concessions, will be available. This event is free



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and open to the public. Phone: 580-723-4466

JULY 18 - 20

Comanche Homecoming Powwow at Sultan Park, 129 E. Colorado St, Walters. Come see the tradition of the Comanche Tribe come to life before your eyes and enjoy a full weekend of American Indian activities and events at this year's Comanche Homecoming Powwow in Walters. Grab a seat along the sidelines of the powwow grounds to see the amazing spectacle of traditional American Indian dancers in full regalia. Categories of dance competition will include gourd, cloth, buckskin, straight, fancy and more. Intertribal dancing and contests will be held throughout the weekend. Phone: 580-492-3240

JULY 26-28

Oklahoma City Powwow Club Indian Hills Powwow, 9300 North Sooner Road, Oklahoma City. Info call Yonavea Hawkins, 405-919-1572 or email yonavea@yahoo.com

Kihekah Steh Annual Powwow, 193rd Street North and Javine Hill Road, Skiatook. Info call Donna, 918-396-1155, or email donnak51@sbcglobal.net.

AUGUST 1-3

Kaw Powwow at Washunga Bay Powwow Grounds, 12613 E. Furguson, Ave., Kaw City. Numerous traditional dance contests such as fancy dancing. A traditional Native American supper will be served at 5pm Saturday and everyone is invited to attend. Call 580-269-2552 or toll free 1-866-404-5297.

Oklahoma Indian Nations Powwow at Concho Powwow Grounds, Concho. Traditional singing, gourd dancing, war dancing and a drum contest. This American Indian event includes dance contests in various categories to include tiny tots, junior boys and girls, women's, men's and golden age categories. Call 405-476-1134.

AUGUST 6-9

American Indian Expo at Caddo County Fairgrounds, Anadarko. Come to the American Indian Expo to enjoy contest dancing, a carnival, parades, dance contests, pageants, a fry bread contest, talent presentations, crafts, concessions and to immerse yourself in the history and ways of present-day Native American tribes. featuring the arts, crafts and traditions of 14 plains Indian tribes. Call 405-247-6651.

AUGUST 8-10

Powwow of Champions at ORU Mabee Center, 7777 S Lewis Ave., Tulsa. The Mabee Center in Tulsa will come alive in a colorful expression of dance, drum music and song as members of tribal nations from around the country gather to honor, strengthen and share traditions with each other and the general public at this year's Powwow of Champions. Over 300 dancers, dressed in full Native American regalia, will participate throughout the weekend in ceremonies and dances, including awe-inspiring grand entries, intertribal dances and dance competitions. For further information, please contact (918) 378-4494

AUGUST 14-17

Wichita Tribal Dance at Wichita Tribal Park, Anadarko. Free event open to the public. Witness as Native American dancers whirl and stomp in traditional regalia to the heart-pumping beat of drums. Dance competitions will be open to Wichita Tribal members and their descendants. Gourd dancers, war dancers and a color guard will all be on-hand to participate in this year's Wichita Tribal Dance. Free meals will be available on designated nights of the event. Food and vendor booths will also be on-site. Call 405-247-2425.

AUGUST 28 - SEPTEMBER 1

The Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival invites all visitors to enjoy tribal heritage activities, an intertribal powwow, Choctaw cultural

exhibitions, stickball games, arts and crafts, free concerts and carnival rides. This annual Tuskahoma event offers activities for all ages including sports tournaments, quilting demonstrations, live performances, buffalo tours and more. The Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival kicks off with the Choctaw Princess Pageant. Come and see which lucky contestant is crowned Little Miss, Junior Miss and Miss Choctaw Nation. Choctaw Nation Capital Grounds, Tuskahoma. Phone: 580-924-8280.

AUGUST 29 - 31

The Cherokee National Holiday in Tahlequah celebrates the signing of the Cherokee Nation Constitution in 1839. This annual event is a celebration of Cherokee heritage and cultural awareness. The Cherokee National Holiday attracts visitors from across the United States as well as from around the world. The three-day holiday is full of activities for all ages, from traditional Native American games like cornstalk and blowgun shooting, marbles and stickball to tournaments in sports like basketball and softball. Powwow begins 5pm Friday, 2pm Saturday at the Cherokee Cultural Grounds, Southwest of the tribal complex on West 810 Rd., Tahlequah. Call 918-453-5536 or email holiday@cherokee.org.

Cherokee Homecoming Art Show. View authentic Cherokee artwork by artists from all across the nation. Open to citizens of the Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees and Eastern Band of the Cherokees, this show will display many examples of traditional and contemporary art. The judged artwork categories in the past have included pottery, basketry and painting. Cherokee Heritage Center 21192 S Keeler Dr, Tahlequah. Phone: 918-456-6007
Toll Free: 888-999-6007

Ottawa Powwow & Celebration. Join members of the Ottawa tribe for dancing and family fun during their annual celebration. This event is

hosted by the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma and continues the tradition of holding no-contest dancing, but instead offers dancers ample opportunities to relax, dance and have fun. The Ottawa Tribal Powwow includes a variety of activities including gourd dancing, war dancing, stomp dancing and other social dances. This event charges no admission and is open to the public. Adawe Indian Park also offers plenty of camping space and RV electrical hook-ups. Adawe Park 11400 S 613 Rd, Miami. Phone: 918-540-1536

AUGUST 30-31

Eufaula Powwow. Native Americans in the Lake Eufaula community come together for the Eufaula Powwow each year during Labor Day weekend. This social American Indian gathering includes singing and traditional dancing, dancing competitions, arts & crafts, delicious food from vendors, tournaments, souvenir t-shirts and programs. There are also opportunities for swimming and camping at Lake Eufaula assuring there is something for the entire family.

This event is free and open to the public. East Ball Field on Lake Eufaula, Eufaula. Phone: 918-707-0361 or 918-617-7985.

SEPTEMBER 12-13

Keetoowah Cherokee Celebration, Keetoowah Tribal Grounds, Tahlequah. Enjoy traditional American Indian crafts, games, Native American dancing and a parade. Call 918-431-1818 to confirm dates.

SEPTEMBER 12-14

Wyandotte Powwow. Witness traditions come to life at the Wyandotte Nation Tribal Powwow, a tribal celebration featuring a variety of dance contests. Watch as all ages, dressed in traditional regalia, compete for cash prizes in categories including women's buckskin, cloth, fancy shawl and jingle dress, and men's grass dance, traditional, straight and fancy dance. The Wyandotte Nation Tribal Powwow will also feature Grandparent's Day events and activities for the entire family. Wyandotte Nation Tribal Grounds, E Hwy 60, Wyandotte.

Phone: 918-678-2297

SEPTEMBER 19-21

Seminole Nation Days. Head to the 46th annual Seminole Nation Days for a weekend of family fun. This event kicks off on Friday morning with the Seminole Nation Cultural Fair. Watch live demonstrations of Seminole ceremonies and traditions, and sample traditional foods. Browse arts and crafts, then admire the customary clothing of the Seminole tribe on display. The celebration of Seminole culture continues on Friday with an intertribal stomp dance in the evening, featuring the Buffalo Dance. Witness as dancers in beautiful regalia showcase elaborate dance steps to powerful drumbeats. Mekusukey Mission, SW of City, Seminole. Phone: 405-382-1010

SEPTEMBER 20-21

Medicine Park Flute Festival. The Medicine Park Flute Festival is a two-day event held to celebrate Native American flute music. On Saturday from 8am-5pm, check out the works of talented

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local and regional artists in a juried art show. Throughout the weekend, enjoy live performances by flute players, browse arts and crafts vendor booths and handmade instruments on display, and spend some time exploring Medicine Park. 148 E Lake Dr. Medicine Park

SEPTEMBER 26-27

Standing Bear Powwow. The Standing Bear Powwow is hosted by the six north-central tribes of Oklahoma. It features inter-tribal dancing, exhibition dancing, contest dancing, tiny tot contests and the crowning of the Standing Bear Princess. Visitors will also find a variety of arts and craft vendors, along with a wide variety of food vendors. 601 Standing Bear Pkwy Ponca City. Phone: 580-762-1514 or 580-762-3148.

SEPTEMBER 26-28

Comanche Nation Fair. The Comanche Nation Fair in Lawton is the largest event of the Comanche Nation and features a powwow, parade, rodeo, free concert, games and an art show. Other activities include basketball and softball tournaments, a horseshoe tournament, quilt show, teen dance, fun run and spirit walk. Arts and craft vendors from around the country will be present, as well as a variety of food vendors. A children's carnival featuring free rides will also be on-site. Comanche Nation Complex, 584 NW Bingo Rd, Lawton. Phone: 580-492-3240 Toll Free: 877-492-4988

OCTOBER 3-5

Kaw Nation Powwow. Come out to experience the Kaw Nation Powwow and enjoy dance contests, exhibitions and audience participation for all ages. Various members of the Kaw Nation will descend upon Kaw City in full regalia on Friday night and Saturday to compete in numerous traditional dance contests such as fancy dancing. A traditional Native American supper will be served at 5pm Saturday and everyone is invited to attend. Visitors to the Kaw Nation Powwow will also enjoy an extensive selection of food and craft vendors. This event is free and open to the public. Washunga Bay Powwow Grounds,

12613 E Furguson Ave, Kaw City. Phone: 580-269-2552 Toll Free: 866-404-5297

OCTOBER 3-5

Miami NOW (Native Oklahoma Weekend) at Miami Fairgrounds, Miami. American Indian food cook-offs, dance exhibitions and storytelling, an open drum and dance arena, arts and craft shows, American Indian artwork on display and more. 918-542-4481.

OCTOBER 4

Chickasaw Annual Meeting & Festival. The Chickasaw Annual Meeting and Festival is a cultural event and festival that celebrates the Chickasaw Nation and its unique heritage in Tishomingo, the historical capitol of the Chickasaw Nation. This event will include demonstrations on cultural significance, traditional food tasting, children's activities, arts and crafts and plenty of food vendors. The annual festival gives all Chickasaws and festival-goers an opportunity to gather and celebrate the unique culture and history of the Chickasaw Nation. Various Locations, Tishomingo. Phone: 405-767-8998.

OCTOBER 11

Pryor Powwow at MidAmerica Expo

Center, 526 Airport Road, Pryor. Visitors can watch several kinds of men's and women's dancing, as well as a variety of competitive inter-tribal dance styles. Call 918-825-0157 to confirm date.

OCTOBER 11-12

Cherokee Art Market. The annual Cherokee Art Market will feature more than 150 inspirational and elite Native American artists from across the nation. Representing 47 federally-recognized tribes, these artists converge in the Sequoyah Grand Ballroom of the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa to showcase their talents. Hard Rock Hotel & Casino 777 W Cherokee St., Catoosa. Phone: 918-384-6990

Kiowa Black Leggings Warrior Society Ceremonial, Indian City Ceremonial Campgrounds, Anadarko. Event includes ceremonial dance festivities that cover two days, traditional dancing, a presentation of colors and the singing of a war mother's song. The Kiowa Black Leggings Warrior Society, known as the Ton-Kon-Gah, was established many generations ago to honor veterans. This historic event dates back to over 200 years ago. Call 405-247-8896 to confirm date.

OCTOBER 25

Bacone College Fall Powwow. Join the

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excitement of the Bacone College Fall Powwow at the Muskogee Civic Center. The powwow will feature singing, dancing and other traditional activities. Performers will include gourd dance singers and gourd dancers as well as the Muskogee Nation Color Guard. Throughout the day, browse the American Indian arts and crafts market for original artwork, handmade jewelry and other items. Muskogee Civic Center, 425 Boston Ave, Muskogee. Phone: 918-687-3299 or 918-360-0057

NOVEMBER 28-29

Choctaw Casino Resort Powwow, Choctaw Event Center, 3702 Choctaw Rd., Durant. Contest powwow, thousands in prize money. Doors open at 10 am Friday and Saturday. Information call 800-522-6170.

Powwow dates, times and locations are subject to change. Please call ahead or check online in advance before making travel plans. See www.nativeoklahoma.us for more listings and updates through the season.



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TIMOTHY TATE NEVAQUAYA

Discovering the Dance of art

By KAREN SHADE

Native Times

JENKS, Okla. – In the lines of his paintings – the crisp, distinct, almost hyper-luminescent lines that seem to shatter on visual impact – Timothy Tate Nevaquaya sees the influence of his father, the acclaimed Comanche artist Doc Tate Nevaquaya. Although the elder passed in 1996, he left behind an artistic legacy that runs like a current through his children – almost all artists. To his son, that legacy lives, breathes and still creates.

“When I’m inside the four corners of this canvas, I take a journey, and I hope and pray that whoever sees my work goes on that same journey and takes them to a beautiful place of fantasy and mystery, even healing,” Nevaquaya says in his studio and gallery, Nevaquaya Fine Arts: A Legacy Gallery.

On a quiet week night at RiverWalk Crossing, the Jenks shopping center purchased last year by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the gallery is awake and art work in the front gallery glows under lamps. They’re not just works by Timothy Nevaquaya. The gallery exhibits pieces by Ruthe Blalock Jones, Jack “BlackHorse” Tointigh, Doug Crowder, Star Hardridge, Bob Creeping Bear, Richard Sanders and Calvert Nevaquaya, his younger brother. In the largest room at the gallery, Nevaquaya (who is also Choctaw) does his work under the gazes of shawl-wrapped women, stomp dancers, stickball players and agile deer – all depicted in a collage of artistic styles. His own work, such as the three-panel piece titled *The Dance of the Apache Mountain Spirits*, watches him work, too. Inspired by the sacred dances of the Chiricahua Apache tribe of western Oklahoma, the work vividly shows ceremonial dancers in the throes of spiritual passion. To the average viewer, the work is in Nevaquaya’s signature style, nothing like his father’s. But the artist sees Doc Tate’s prints all over it. The traditional forms and the subject matter are his father’s influence, a consequence of learning from one of the most important Native American artists of the 20th century beginning at the age of three. Doc Tate surrounded himself with artists.

“I started to observe what they were doing and realized from an early age this was what I was

going to do for the rest of his life,” he says.

As a child, he drew. As he grew older, Nevaquaya became an apprentice to his father. They collaborated on paintings often, as the son did background work upon which Doc Tate painted the exquisite detail for which he was noted. The elder Nevaquaya practiced a style of painting first made prominent by the Kiowa Five artists – a style that depicted images in flat two-dimensional representations using neutral or pastel colors. This approach was called the traditional style, and its practitioners ushered in a new era of Native American art.

In his early 20s, Nevaquaya became serious about his art and looked to his father and other masters of the traditional approach for direction. It wasn’t until about seven years ago that he discovered his own.

“As time went on, I started to learn that form of art, but I realized that there was something more to what I was doing,” he says. “...I was doing realistic art, and I came to a point in my art when I was frustrated with what I was doing because there were no real breakthroughs. I was struggling at that time.”

Then he had his revelation. While working on a piece, he smeared the paint. At the point of correcting himself, Nevaquaya continued to smudge the lines on his canvas, curious to see what would happen next.

“People talk about having a ‘happy accident,’ but to me this far exceeded that,” he says. “... The more spontaneous I got, it seemed like the painting actually started to improve. I began to realize that something was starting to evolve here. Right there was the beginning of the new revolution, new growth. It was like learning a new language in seconds, and for once in my life, I actually let my intuition take over.”

It was actually more than a revolution for an artist who had struggled so long with his work and had hopes to become a full-time artist. It was a personal revelation. Through his new technique, Nevaquaya was able to translate the mystery and spiritual power of the ceremonial dancers that had fascinated him since his youth. And like the Comanche warriors who painted symbols of the spirit world on their war shields, he was practicing a form of medicine. It’s still good for



his soul, he says.

“The dance was really mysterious to me. In grade school, my teachers didn’t quite understand the images I was doing. They didn’t realize that I was starting an art career. I didn’t realize it. Today, they’re a primary focus of what I do,” he says.

Last year, he and his brother Calvert created an art installation for the grand opening of the Briscoe Western Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas. They created a 16-foot teepee painted with images of a buffalo hunt and gatherings in their own artistic styles. The Buffalo Warriors’ Lodge was contemporary in its design but also drew on historical symbols to tell the narrative of a man’s life. A year earlier, they held a joint show of their works in an exhibit titled Breaking Traditions at the Southern Plains Indian Museum in Anadarko. These days, the

painting commissions are coming in steadily as a result of the clientele he and his wife, Alicia Nevaquaya, have worked hard to build over the years.

As important as it was for Nevaquaya and his brothers to discover their own artistic identity apart from their father’s, he is the first extol his elder’s achievements. Not only does he help carry on his father’s legacy in painting, Nevaquaya continues Doc Tate’s other great triumph – reviving Native American flute playing and making. The sons all either play and or make flutes the way their father did.

When he plays the flute in the gallery, the tone wraps around the walls, and Nevaquaya himself takes on the enigmatic quality he strives to connect with in his painting. It looks so effortless.

“People think that being an artist is the easy life, that you can sit back and paint.

Although I love it, you still have to work at it,” Nevaquaya says. “Those paintings don’t just happen, you have to design your palette, you have to manipulate the colors the way you want them, and that’s before your initial drawing even goes on the canvas and all the prep work.”

But it’s worth it.

“I tell a lot of up-and-coming artists that the only way this knowledge will come to you is by being consistent in the work you’re doing. You’ll never have the grand revelation until you start to indulge in what you’re doing, because all you’re doing is learning and learning and learning. I tell them to keep reading, keep searching, be passionate about what it is, and this thing will come alive on you and will help you.”

NEVAQUAYA (WHO IS ALSO CHOCTAW) DOES HIS WORK UNDER THE GAZES OF SHAWL-WRAPPED WOMEN, STOMP DANCERS, STICKBALL PLAYERS AND AGILE DEER – ALL DEPICTED IN A COLLAGE OF ARTISTIC STYLES.



TIMOTHY TATE NEVAQUAYA WORKS ON A PAINTING LAST WEEK INSIDE HIS STUDIO AT RIVERWALK CROSSING IN JENKS. PHOTOS BY KAREN SHADE



MARY WATASHE, EUCHEE, JOKES WITH HER AUDIENCE AS SHE DEMONSTRATES HOW TO MAKE GRAPE DUMPLINGS - A SUMMER TREAT FAVORED BY MANY SOUTHEASTERN TRIBES.

PHOTOS BY LISA SNELL

NATIVE COOKING:

Making Pvrko Afke, a SE Native treat

By LISA SNELL
Cherokee

OKMULGEE, Okla. – The first question came quickly.

“How much flour do you use?”

Mary Watashe looked up, a twinkle in her eyes and a big grin creasing her face.

“It’s all just guesswork,” she said.

She went back to mixing Welch’s grape juice into the mound of flour on the cutting board in front of her. A hot plate next to her held a stockpot full of simmering grape juice. Nearby, a wooden rolling pin waited flouring.

“Is that regular flour or self-rising?”

“Regular.”

Watashe, an enrolled citizen of the Euchee Tribe of Oklahoma, was making

Pvrko Afke (grape dumplings) a simple treat of two, maybe three ingredients according to taste, and today she had an audience. More than 75 people filled the room at the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative, some on the edge of their seats, craning for a better look as Watashe kneaded the purple dough and cracked jokes.

“For all you diabetics, I use Splenda,” she chuckled, then said almost to herself, “I forgot the sugar.”

“Someone bring me the sugar!”

A crock of sugar was brought. Watashe peered over the rim of the tall stockpot and squinted before sifting in a good half cup, maybe more, directly into the pot and giving it a stir.

“I don’t measure anything,” she said

and grinned. She picked up a shiny silver scoop and dipped out a measure of juice and took a sip. She smacked her lips. “Just right!”

She went back to the dough and formed a ball. It looked like pale purpled Play-Doh. She floured the rolling pin and rolled the dough out to about a ¼” thickness, adding more flour as she went to keep the dough from sticking to the pin.

Satisfied with the thickness and consistency of the dough, she began cutting strips through the dough and cutting the strips into squares.

“What kind of knife do you use?” came a question from the audience.

Another grin from Watashe.

“Any one that will cut,” she joked. She

“FOR ALL YOU DIABETICS, I USE SPLENDA,” SHE CHUCKLED, THEN SAID ALMOST TO HERSELF, “I FORGOT THE SUGAR.” “SOMEONE BRING ME THE SUGAR!”

was using a butter knife.

She began dropping the squares of dough into the simmering pot of juice, her fingertips thickly coated with dough and flour. She was careful not to splash the hot liquid.

“How long do you cook them?” someone asked.

This time Watashe looked surprised.

“Why, until I’m done making them!” She shook her head as if that was the silliest thing she’d ever heard and went back to the task of kneading another batch of dough, rolling it out, and cutting squares of dumplings for the pot.

She gave the pot a stir after dropping each new batch in.

Traditionally, grape dumplings were made with possum grapes, a wild grape that hangs from woody vines that are often found wrapped up and dangling from trees along creek banks and in wooded areas. The fruit is small and sour, with little pulp. They ripen in late summer or early fall. Getting enough juice from possum grapes takes a lot of grapes and a lot of work.

“I just use Welch’s,” Watashe said. “It works just fine.”

As the dumplings simmered, the cooked ones rose. Eventually, all the dumplings were crowded at the top and the grape juice had thickened from the flour that fell from Watashe’s fingers

as she dropped the dough into the hot grape juice.

Time to eat.

– *The Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative is hosting traditional foods cooking classes once a month. The next class is yet to be announced, but updates may be found on their Facebook page, Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative and online at www.mvskokefood.org. For more information call 918-756-5915 or 918-756-2701. Classes are free and open to everyone. The MFSI offices are located at 100 E. 7th Street, Ste. 101, Okmulgee (next door to KOKL radio station).*



**MARY WATASHE DEMONSTRATES HOW TO MAKE GRAPE DUMPLINGS.
“IT’S ALL JUST GUESSWORK,” SHE SAID.**





MARY WATASHE DROPS FLOURED DUMPLINGS INTO A POT OF SIMMERING GRAPE JUICE - ONCE THE DUMPLINGS RISE TO THE TOP, THEY'RE DONE.

Pvrko Afke / Grape Dumplings

Grape dumplings are a favorite among many Oklahoma tribes. Modern cooks may use fresh cultivated Concord grapes and juice to replace the wild grapes that traditionally were used, although wild grapes can still be found in parts of Oklahoma and the southeastern United States. If you can't find Concord grapes, make the sauce with Concord grape juice.

For dumplings:

1 Cup flour

2 Tsp sugar

½ Cup grape juice

(Approximate measurements)

For cooking:

Remainder of 48 oz jug of grape juice

Mix flour and sugar. Add juice and mix into stiff dough.

Roll dough very thin on floured board and cut into strips ½" wide (or roll dough in hands and break off pea-sized bits).

Drop into lightly boiling grape juice and cook for 10 - 12 minutes.



LAND CONSOLIDATION EFFORTS UNDERWAY

The Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations, created to implement part of the *Cobell Settlement*, is offering fair market value to landowners for voluntarily restoring fractional land interests to tribes, which helps ensure that Indian lands stay in trust.

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Cherokee Strip Museum

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Chickasaw Council House Museum

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www.chickasaw.net

Chickasaw Nation Visitor Center

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580-436-2603
www.chickasaw.net

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580-371-9835
www.chickasaw.net

Choctaw Nation Museum

Council House Road • Tuskahoma
918-569-4465

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405-878-5830
www.potawatomi.org/culture

Comanche National Museum and Cultural Center

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www.comanchemuseum.com

Coo-Y-Yah Museum

847 Hwy 69 and S 8th St • Pryor
918-825-2222

Creek Council House Museum

106 W 6th • Okmulgee
918-756-2324
www.tourokmulgee.com

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918-253-4345 or 866-253-4345

Delaware Tribal Museum

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405-247-2448

Five Civilized Tribes Museum

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www.fivetribes.org

Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art

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405-325-3272
www.ou.edu/fjjma

Fort Gibson Historic Site and Interpretive Center

907 N Garrison Ave. • Fort Gibson
918-478-4088
www.okhistory.org

Fort Sill Historic Landmark and Museum

437 Quanah Rd. • Fort Sill
580-442-5123
<http://sill-www.army.mil/museum>

Fort Washita Historic Site and Museum

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580-924-6502

Gardner Mission and Museum

Hwy 70 E • Broken Bow
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918-287-5441
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2401 Chautauqua Ave. • Norman
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www.snomnh.ou.edu

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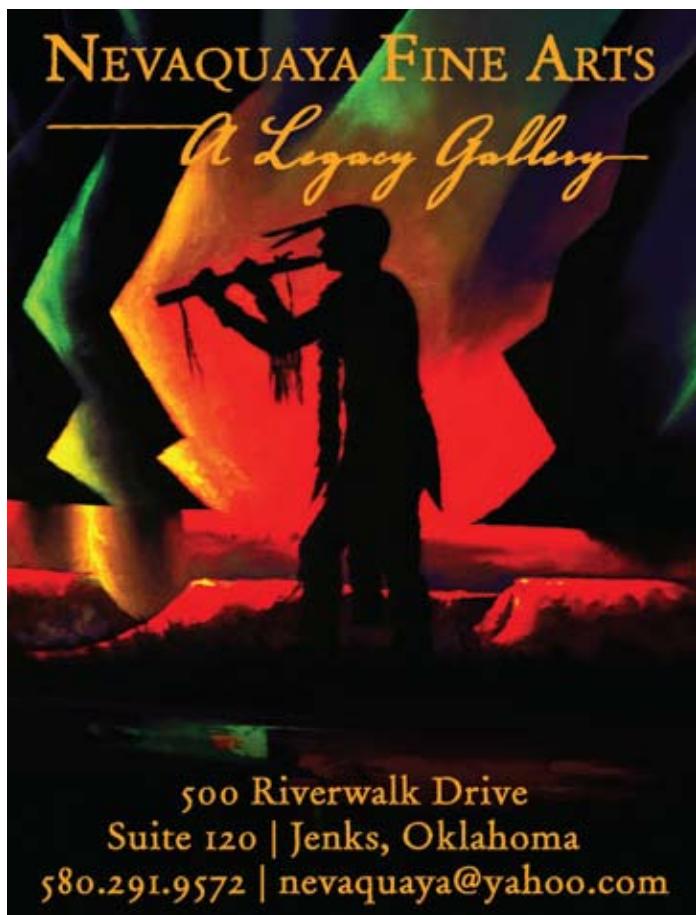
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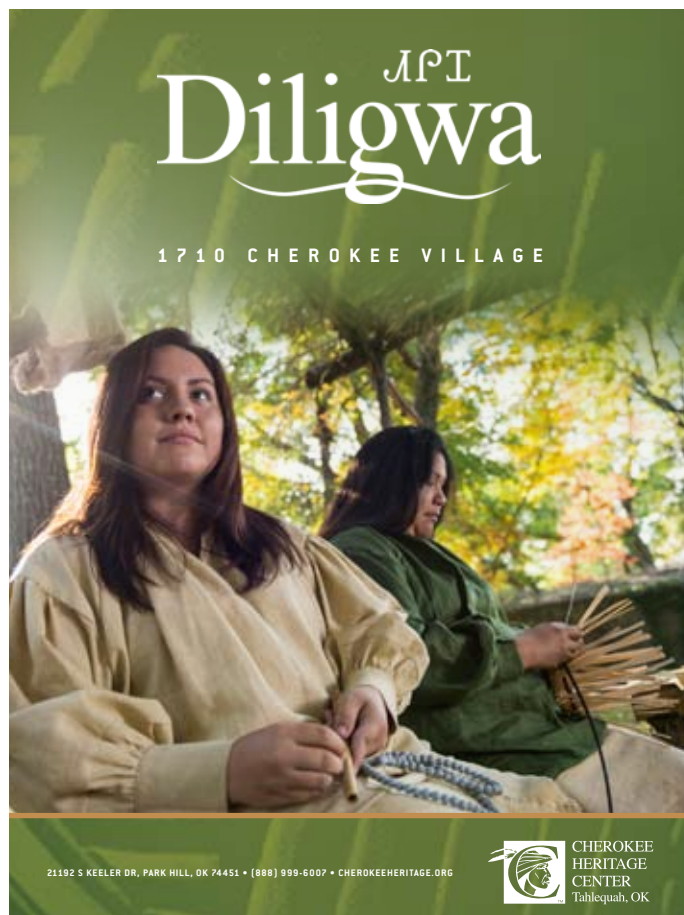
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500 years of history: The Otoe and

By HEATHER PAYNE

RED ROCK, Okla. – The Otoes and Missourias, along with the Winnebago, Ho-Chunk and Iowa Tribes, were once part of a single tribe that lived in the Great Lakes Region of the United States. In the 16th century the tribes separated from each other and migrated west and south. The evidence of this migration is reflected in the beadwork of the Otoes & Missourias, which features floral motifs more commonly seen in tribes of the Great Lakes Region.

The Otoes and Missourias eventually settled in the lower Missouri River Valley. They built villages near each other and maintained a kinship. While related to each other in language and customs, the two tribes were still two distinct people with different clan structures, recognized leadership and beliefs.

The Otoe-Missourias were predominately hunter-gatherers. They did grow and harvest corn, beans and squash, but this mostly subsistence

farming was intended to supplement the bison and other game that made up the majority of the Otoe-Missouria diet. As was their tradition, the tribes would migrate to follow the buffalo, but they stayed in a general area of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Kansas. Their villages consisted of earth lodges, but tipis were used during migration.

In their own languages, the Otoes call themselves Jiwere (jee-WEH-ray) and the Missourias call themselves Nutachi (noo-TAH-chi). The state of Nebraska gets its name from an Otoe-Missourias phrase. The phrase is “Ni Brathge” (nee BRAHTH-gay) which means “water flat”. Ni Brathge was what the tribes called the Platte River, which is a major river that flows through the state.

The state of Missouri and the Missouri River are both named after the Missouri Tribe, which once dominated the region. The earliest record of the tribe’s specific location in the area was on a French map in 1673.

The tribe controlled traffic and

trade along the Missouri River and its tributaries. Trade was a vital part of Otoe and Missouria life for centuries. The Missouria traded with the Spanish, French and Americans for various goods. All three nations courted the Otoes and Missourias for exclusive trading agreements to gain access to the rich resources of the Missouri River Valley.

Unfortunately, contact with Europeans also brought new diseases. Smallpox decimated both tribes and weakened their hold on the region. The Missouria Tribe lost many people to disease. In their weakened state, many opposing tribes attacked to acquire the riches accrued by the Missouria through their centuries of trade dominance. Warfare with these other tribes killed many of the healthy warriors. In the late 1700s, with few people remaining, the Missourias went to live with their relatives the Otoes, who themselves had lost many people.

In 1803, the United States bought 828,000 square miles of land west of the Mississippi from France in the



HISTORIC OTOE-MISSOURIA TRIBAL PHOTO

Missouria Tribes' tale of survival

Louisiana Purchase. The following year, President Jefferson sent the Corp of Discovery west to explore and record the new lands. In the summer of 1804, the Otoe and Missouria were the first tribes to hold government-to-government council with Lewis and Clark acting in their official roles as representatives of President Jefferson.

Lewis and Clark presented to the chiefs a document that offered peace between the newly formed government of the United States and the governments of the Otoe & Missouria. However, at the same time, the documents established the sovereignty of the United States over the tribes.

As the decades passed, the Otoe & Missouria people learned how the United States intended on exerting its sovereignty. The traditional lands of the Otoe-Missouria (what is today Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri) were desirable farming lands to the settlers from the east. As more and more settlers came onto Otoe-Missouria land,

the tribal people fought to protect it.

Although a small tribe, the Otoe-Missourias bravely fought any who attacked them including the white settlers who had essentially squatted on the tribe's land. This created a conflict for the United States government and they took action to protect settlers. In 1855 the Otoe-Missouria people were confined by the United States government to a reservation on the Big Blue River in southeast Nebraska.

Life on the Big Blue Reservation was hard. The tribe was not allowed to hunt for buffalo. The government encouraged a shift from a migratory lifestyle to an agrarian one without consideration of long established tradition or social structure. For years the tribe watched as acre by acre of their land was sold off by the government to non-Indians or stolen by white squatters.

They suffered as treaties were broken and food, medicine, livestock and basic essentials were not delivered as promised. Sickness was rampant, children starved

and the mortality rate climbed higher year after year. In the 17th century the tribes had been estimated to be 15,000 people strong. One Missouria village alone had been recorded at 5,000 people by French explorers Marquette and Joliet. However, by 1880 they were reduced to a little more than 300 survivors.

In October of 1881, a procession of 320 Otoe-Missouria left the Big Blue Reservation for a new reservation in Indian Territory. The reservation was purchased with funds from the sale of the remaining lands of the Big Blue. The new reservation was located in Red Rock, Oklahoma, where the tribal headquarters is still located.

Once settled, Otoe and Missouria children were taken away from their parents and sent to government boarding schools to be "civilized". Their hair was cut and they were forbidden speak their language or to practice their religion or culture. Children had to learn English. Today, tribal elders remember being punished for speaking their native



OTOE-MISSOURIA ENCAMPMENT, 2012

THE LARGEST GATHERING OF OTOE-MISSOURIA PEOPLE IS THE SUMMER ENCAMPMENT HELD EACH YEAR ON THE THIRD WEEKEND OF JULY IN RED ROCK. THIS GATHERING HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF THE TRIBE IN 1881.

language at school.

The stigma of speaking the traditional language passed into the home. Some tribal members did not teach their children their language because they did not want them to be punished in school or because they thought it would be better for them to learn “white ways.”

Because so many of the traditions and the language were discouraged by the government, much of the language has been lost. Today the tribe is struggling to maintain what knowledge of the language still exists. Some of the information gathered by the tribe regarding the language was documented by non-Indians, missionaries and government agents.

In 1834, a missionary named Reverend Moses Merrill created a system of writing the Otoe language. He published a book of Otoe church hymns called *Wdwtwhl Wdwdklha Tva Eva Wdhonetl*. The title of the book translates to “Otoe book their song sacred”. This book is considered to be the first book ever published in Nebraska.

Otoe-Missouria land was again taken from the tribe in 1887 when the U.S. government passed the Dawes Act. The act provided for the distribution of tribally held lands in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) into individually-owned parcels. This broke up the Otoe-Missouria reservation and opened land deemed as “surplus” to settlement by non-Indians and development by railroads.

Today the tribe has grown to more than 3,000 tribal members. Many of them still live in the state of Oklahoma, but there are members who live throughout the United States including New Jersey, California, Hawaii and Alaska. Although no longer confined to a reservation, many of the tribal members do hold allotments.

These parcels of land have been inherited from one generation to the next resulting in some acres having dozens if not hundreds of owners. This has left the land basically unusable except for leases to farmers and ranchers. The income from these leases is then divided by all of the land owners.

The tribe is governed by a seven member elected body called the Tribal Council. It consists of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, 1st Member, 2nd Member and 3rd Member. Council members hold three year terms.

The Tribal Council, has parlayed the gaming revenue from their for casinos into long-term investment in other sustainable industries including retail ventures, loan companies, natural resource development, hospitality, entertainment and several other projects still in development.



POWWOW DANCERS PARTICIPATING IN THE OTOE-MISSOURIA ENCAMPMENT

The tribe has its own Police Department with jurisdiction over all tribal land including the tribal businesses and casinos. Additionally, the prosperity of the tribal businesses has allowed the tribe to offer tribal members with access to education assistance, housing, medical care, child care, elder services, social services and other needs.

Through all of the turmoil and oppression the Otoe-Missouria people have struggled to maintain their identity.

Much has been lost. The language is slowly being pieced back together through old recordings of long gone tribal elders. Some of the recordings are so old they were originally recorded on wax cylinders.

Several clans have gone extinct due to the high mortality rate of the 19th century. Today the tribe has seven clans--the eagle, bear, buffalo, pigeon, beaver, elk and owl--but elders remember a snake and coyote clan. The observance of sub-clans is also extinct. At one time someone would distinguish themselves as a member of a sub-clan i.e. brown bear clan or black bear clan. Although still part of the larger Bear Clan, they acknowledged their sub-clan as well. This is no longer done.

Some traditions remain. Funerary practices are still followed and are unique to the Otoe-Missouria people. Naming ceremonies also still take place for young children. The sweat lodge tradition is still practiced on a weekly basis at the tribal complex for the benefit of tribal members.

In the early 20th century, Otoe-Missouria tribal members adopted the practices of the peyote church and were part of the incorporation of both the First Born Church of Christ and the Native American Church. Services for these two churches are periodically held in the Red Rock area. Additionally, the Otoe Baptist Church still has a strong relationship with the tribe.

However, the largest gathering of Otoe-Missouria people is the Summer Encampment held each year on the third weekend of July in Red Rock. The four day celebration is a homecoming for the Otoe-Missouria people. This gathering has taken place in Oklahoma since the arrival of the tribe in 1881. Filled with song, dancing and fellowship, the Encampment is the highlight of the social calendar. It is a reminder of life before so much was lost. And the Encampment will sustain.



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